

Washington Citizens' Commission on Salaries for Elected Officials
April 19, 2007 – Meeting Minutes
Red Lion, Spokane

The Meeting of the Washington Citizens' Commission on Salaries for Elected Officials was convened and brought to order by Ron Hopkins, Chair, at 6:00 p.m.

Commission Members Present:

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| • Scott Baxter | • Willeen Denton-Hornbeck |
| • Don Boggs | • David Irwin |
| • Dale Carlisle | • Linda Lopez |
| • Jim Clark | • John McCallum |
| • Dorothy Gerard | • Dirk Muyskens |
| • Janet Hays, via telephone | • Brian Sadden |
| • Ron Hopkins, Chair | |

Commission Members with an Excused Absence:

- Alan Doman, Vice-Chair
- Katherine Wade-Easley

Commission Members with an Unexcused Absence:

- Debra Alyea

Staff Present:

- Carol Sayer, Director
- Teri Wright, Executive Assistant

Ron Hopkins read the Opening Statement for the Commission.

Ron Hopkins asked the Commission if there were any changes that needed to be incorporated into the March 22, 2007, meeting minutes. There were no changes requested. John McCallum motioned to approve the meeting minutes and was seconded by Dirk Muyskens. Ron Hopkins called for a vote and it was unanimously passed.

Ron Hopkins stated that there were members of the public present who wished to testify before the Commission. He read the Procedure for Public Testimony.

Public Testimony was as follows:

Marilee Rolof, representing herself, testified that the elected officials in general are not paid what they should be and legislators are grossly underpaid.

Charles Bourg, representing himself, said that state employees don't receive the kind of raises the Commission is giving and the raises are exorbitant. The elected officials know what the

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salary is when they run for office and the salary should stay at that level for the duration of their term. Not only do state employees not get that kind of raise, but the public sector doesn't give large raises. He ended by asking that the Commission to please not waste more tax dollars.

Louise Chadez, representing herself, stated that she had agreed with everything Mr. Charles Bourg had said and asked that the Commission please consider not giving the raises in the 2007-08 Proposed Salary Schedule.

Mary Ann Murphy, representing Partners with Families and Children, stated that Legislators not only need this raise, but deserve it. Legislators, especially those not geographically located close to Olympia, are spread very thin. She is concerned about the growing gap between salaries legislators are paid and the demands of the office, especially those representing Eastern Washington.

Ron Hopkins mentioned that there were several local judges present and asked that they introduce themselves. Present were: Judge Sara Dern, District Court, Judge John Schulthers, Court of Appeals, Judge Kathleen O'Connor, Superior Court, Judge John Coovey, District Court, Judge Annette Plese, District and Municipal Court, and Dirk Marler, with the Washington Administrative Office of the Courts. They were present to answer any questions posed by the Commission.

Ron Hopkins thanked the public for their comments and thanked the judiciary for taking time to attend the Commission meeting.

No one else had signed up for public testimony so the meeting moved in to work session.

Carol Sayer gave the following staff reports:

- Our statutory audit findings came out with no exceptions. We anticipate having an exit interview in the near future.
- There are several new comparative information charts that have been mailed to you as well as included in your meeting folder.

Teri Wright gave the following staff reports:

- She pointed out a new handout that addresses legislation being tracked and contacts made by the public.
- She mentioned that we are approaching the end of biennium and requested that all travel reimbursements be sent in no later than May 31st to allow for processing time.

Ron Hopkins called for a discussion regarding the 2007-08 Proposed Salary Schedule and asked each Commissioner to comment on their current thoughts:

- Dorothy Gerard – We did what needed to be done. Her thinking has not changed and she supports implementation of the proposal.

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- Brian Sadden – We received a lot of comments from state employees. He is a bit uncomfortable with the proposal for the Lt. Governor but otherwise solidly supports the proposal.
- Linda Lopez – Supports the proposal.
- Don Boggs – The people he has talked with are not concerned about the proposal; their concerns are about what is happening in the Seattle area. We are doing a good job.
- Jim Clark – He supports the proposal. With respect to the negative comments, he questions how informed people are.
- Dave Irwin – Agrees with Don Boggs. The people in Seattle are concerned about transportation issues.
- Dale Carlisle – He finds it interesting that some organizations have implemented increases significantly greater than ours but have not gotten any negative publicity. He believes that the public comments we have seen may mainly be the result of somewhat misleading media reports. He is not inclined to make changes to the proposal. With respect to the Lt. Governor, he read his letter and reviewed the job description. His service as Governor is referenced in it. He believes it should be left as is. With respect to the Judiciary, he believes the proposal is appropriate. There has been no public objection to the proposal for the Judiciary.
- Willeen Denton-Hornbeck – Agrees with Dale Carlisle in all accounts and appreciates the comments we have received from the public. She is very interested in seeing the outcome of the legislative study on committee chairs.
- Scott Baxter – He believes the problem is education of the public. He continues to struggle with the proposal for the Lt. Governor. The rest of the proposal is good. It may be more palatable to the public to raise the Lt. Governor's salary more slowly. He believes our greatest challenge is educating the public.
- Willeen Denton-Hornbeck – She interjected that our requirement is to establish salaries that attract well qualified people. The Lt. Governor has to be competent to take over as Governor if necessary. The proposal catches that salary up to where it should be had it not been held back.

Staff will add a footnote to the rationale for the final salary schedule adopted for the Lt. Governor to reflect that the new salary is a catch-up increase to reflect that the position was kept at low pay for a considerable time.

- Dirk Muyskens – Stated that it is an honor to be a committee chair. He doesn't see any reason to pay them a stipend.
- John McCallum – Is pleased with the proposal. The Commission bit the bullet and did what needed to be done.
- Janet Hays – After reading the Lt. Governor's letter she did some research. In the federal government, the Vice President receives the President's salary when he serves as President. She believes the Lieutenant Governor is adequately paid for the duties of the position and for acting as the Governor.
- Ron Hopkins – He believes that people who say the elected officials are overpaid are primarily frustrated with government. Many of the comments received are from state

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employees who don't know what the jobs actually do. He is concerned that the perception may be that we are stubborn in dealing with the public. Other than that, he is quite satisfied with the proposal.

- Scott Baxter – The biggest misunderstanding the public has is that we are setting salaries for people not positions.
- Teri Wright – Noted that a statement to that effect has been posted on our Web site home page and the salary information page. Also, as we update brochures and publications, we will add that statement.
- Willeen Denton-Hornbeck – She agrees that it is important to hear testimony in a neutral way. Stated that Brian has done a good job of explaining our rationale for the increases.

Carol Sayer asked for a discussion on the per diem aspect of the Lt. Governor's letter.

Dorothy Gerard stated that if the Commission were to include per diem in the Lt. Governor's base salary we would have to do so for legislators as well. Dale Carlisle mentioned the per diem is set by the Legislature; we can't tinker with it. Also, there could be tax consequences. Carol Sayer will respond to the Lt. Governor stating that we have no authority to include the additional compensation he receives for service as Governor or his legislative per diem in his base salary. Our statutory responsibility is to base the salary on the duties and responsibilities of the position.

There being no additional topics for discussion Ron Hopkins adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:10 p.m.



Alan Doman, Vice-Chair

5/15/07

Date